(b) whether the Ministry's above decision is in sharp contrast to the stand taken by a Parliamentary Panel, which in a Report submitted to Parliament in May, said that except the judicial decision making, all other activities of administration and persons included in judiciary are subject to RTI Act; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Pending cases and strength of judges in courts

1466. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the pendency of cases in the lower courts, High Courts and Supreme Court;

(b) whether, keeping in view the large number of pendency of cases, Government is going to increase the number of Judges in trial courts, High Courts and Supreme Court;

(c) what is the number of women judges in High Courts and Supreme Court; and

(d) whether Government is contemplating to increase the number of women judges in the higher courts?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) 48,838 cases were pending in Supreme Court of India as on 31.8.08. 38,82,074 cases and 2,52,40,185 cases were pending in High Courts and Subordinate Courts respectively as on 30.6.08.

(b) The judge strength of the High Courts is reviewed periodically. 163 posts of Judges have been created in various High Courts during the years 2006, 2007 and 2008. As regards the Supreme Court, Government has already introduced The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2008 in the Lok Sabha on 29.4.2008. The Bill envisages increase in the Judge strength of the Supreme Court from the present 25 to 30 Judges, excluding the Chief Justice of India.

Increase in the number of Judges in Trial Courts is within the purview of the State Government.

(c) There is no woman Judge in the Supreme Court of India. There are 44 women Judges in various High Courts in the country.

(d) Appointments of Judges of the High Courts are made under Article 217 of the Constitution of India which does not provide for reservation for any caste or class of persons. The Government has, however, addressed letters to the Chief Justices of the High Courts from time to time, requesting them to locate women from the Bar who are suitable for appointment as High Court Judges.

Constitution of Committees by Supreme Court

1467. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) which are the Government departments with respect to which the Supreme Court of India has constituted Committees for monitoring the directions issued by them or otherwise;

(b) the details of the functions of these Committees;

(c) the number of reports submitted by each of these Committees; and

(d) whether Government has consented for constitution of such Committees or any of these?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) As per information collected from the Registry of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Registry does not maintain any record of the Committees, if any, constituted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on judicial side for monitoring the directions issued by the Hon'ble Court or otherwise.

(b) to (d)) Do not arise.

Revision in pay and allowances of Judges

1468. SHRI VIRENDRA BHATIA:

SHRI RAM NARAYAN SAHU:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state whether Government is considering to revise the pay and allowances of Supreme Court and High Court Judges, in view of the fact that the Central Government has already enhanced the pay and allowances of their employees, on the basis of Justice Shri Krishna Pay Commission Report?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): Yes, Sir.

Appointment of Judges

1469. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:

SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Supreme Court has asked Government to spell out its stand on an application for alleged violation of procedure in the Memorandum of Procedures on appointment of Judges;

(b) if so, whether the Supreme Court gave this direction while hearing a petition filed by the former Law Minister;

(c) if so, whether Government has considered the directive of the Supreme Court; and

(d) if so, what are details thereof and what is the directions issued by the Supreme Court in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (d) In Writ Petition (C) No. 375/2007, the Supreme Court directed the Union of India to file an affidavit indicating the following details:

1. How many additional Judges have been made permanent Judges after 1.1.1999?
2. In how many cases additional Judges have been made permanent Judges only on the basis of the recommendation of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India.
3. In how many cases additional Judges were made permanent with the recommendation of collegium, if any?